

Cascade Valley Hospital Provides Safer, More Efficient Patient Care with iatricSystems Visual Flowsheet™



OBJECTIVE: Cascade Valley Hospital recognized that using an electronic health record to collect patient data is only the first step in providing quality patient care. They also identified that making sense of the data is an important next step and that it can involve lengthy data mining, which may or may not produce the desired results. Therefore, the hospital searched for a tool that would help busy doctors, nurses, and other staff quickly access, view, and analyze the data for use in clinical decision-making. They needed the tool to automate these important processes and meet the needs of different user teams and clinical workflows.

SITUATION: Cascade Valley Hospital is a 48-bed MEDITECH MAGIC hospital in Arlington, Washington, located an hour north of Seattle, serving residents of North Snohomish County with a full range of healthcare services. The hospital has won several awards for patient safety and excellence in care, supported by a very proactive informatics team that works closely with clinical staff.

SOLUTION: Cascade Valley Hospital uses iatricSystems Visual Flowsheet™ to integrate with the hospital's MEDITECH EHR and display patient data in a graphical format that enables faster, more accurate clinical assessments and decisions. Because of its customized flowsheets, flexible drop-down menus, and many other useful features, hospital staff has embraced Visual Flowsheet for monitoring and documenting patient care.

RESULTS: Cascade Valley doctors, nurses, and ancillary staff rely on Visual Flowsheet to provide clear views of patient data, trends, and patterns, as well as an efficient method to access MEDITECH documentation screens. The ability to view patient information in a variety of ways also provides clarity for retrospective treatment reviews and has helped the hospital respond easily and successfully to outside audits.

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– Kathie Schroeder, R.N., BSN
Clinical Informatics Coordinator
Cascade Valley Hospital



Cascade Valley Hospital serves communities in North Snohomish County, Washington, with the mission to provide Excellent, Friendly Healthcare Close to Home. Kathie Schroeder, R.N., BSN, Clinical Informatics Coordinator at Cascade Valley, knows that fulfilling that goal depends not only on timely access to clinical data but also on how that data is presented, (especially when there's so much of it). "Providers and nursing staff need to quickly view patient data in a way that's not just displayed in a nice presentable format, but the values have immediate meaning and don't require additional interpretation or manipulation. That's why we use Visual Flowsheet."

Enabling Clarity and Understanding

iatricSystems Visual Flowsheet™ integrates with Cascade Valley's MEDITECH EHR to present clinical data in a graphical format that saves time and helps hospital staff deliver safer care. Customized flowsheets bring clarity and rapid understanding to many different clinical workflows — with color-coding and other design features that show trends and action items at a glance. "The ability to present data in a variety of combinations is extremely valuable, and the added ability to assign meaning to colors, which provide visual cues, is fantastic," Kathie adds. "It confirms that things are normal and alerts us when they're not. Is that measure documented? Is an order pending? Are we meeting our goals? Where are we falling short?"

Using Visual Flowsheet, Kathie and her colleagues have created multiple flowsheets that clinicians across the hospital rely on for patient care. For example, Pain Management tracks pain assessments, medications, respiratory status, and other key indicators. "Clicking the tab gives us a beautiful presentation of the pain management plan and if it's effective." Blood Glucose tracks blood sugar values against diet and medication, providing a clear view of blood glucose levels and their response to treatment. The hospital also wanted to improve visibility of patient care plans, which they addressed with a Plan of Care flowsheet for tracking nursing diagnoses, goals, and interventions. Kathie notes that this flowsheet also helped when accreditation surveyors visited the hospital. "All the care plan information was easily visible, and very clear, so we passed the survey with flying colors."

More than an Attractive Display

The capabilities and flexibility of Visual Flowsheet make it much more than just an attractive display. "As we learned what Visual Flowsheet offered, we realized it could provide one-stop shopping for all the information we needed for patient care," Kathie says. "One huge time-saver our nurses appreciate is the ability to document right from the flowsheet, rather than having to navigate to another launching point for the documentation screen. The ability to build drop-down menus to access useful reports is extremely helpful, and the automated calculation feature saves us lots of time." And if Kathie ever needs help using Visual Flowsheet to its full advantage, she's in good hands with iatricSystems support. "Carolyn Bourke is able to figure out exactly what I need and take it to the next level. I don't have to wait days, and sometimes I don't even wait hours. That's amazing customer service."

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The hospital continues to roll out new flowsheets to meet the demand of its caregiver community. CNAs have their own specific flowsheet to track and document the interventions for which they are responsible. Other flowsheets are used by the quality manager, respiratory therapists, the discharge planning team, and the birthing center for monitoring mother and baby care.

The Right Intervention Faster

"I am really passionate about Visual Flowsheet," Kathie concludes. "I get a lot of joy when teaching the flowsheet to new staff. My favorite part is the "aha" moment in training, that always comes, when they realize the power it has to take simple individual pieces of data, and organize and present it in a logical way that will help them efficiently and effectively identify problems and determine the best plan of care."